

Resolution: Rank-and-file PCC Workers Support Rent Control

WHEREAS, As members of PCC Workers United, a rank-and-file group of PCC workers and UFCW 3000 members, we are fighting for a base wage of \$25/hour and a top pay scale of \$35/hour with cost-of-living adjustments in recognition of the serious burden the housing crisis inflicts on the working people of Seattle and grocery workers in particular

WHEREAS, The housing crisis in Seattle is accelerating, and Seattle renters are being hit hard. Even before last year's record inflation, between 2010 and 2020 Seattle rents increased by a whopping [92 percent](#). Now, the average rent for a one-bedroom in Seattle is [over \\$2,200](#). Sky-high rents are driving working-class households, seniors, students, and especially working families of color out of our city, and sometimes into homelessness; and

WHEREAS, this housing crisis has led to tens of thousands of workers being economically evicted from the city, including many union members in Seattle who cannot afford to live in the city where they work; and

WHEREAS, The soaring cost of housing disproportionately affects people of color, immigrants, the LGBTQ community, indigenous peoples' communities, disabled community members, and women. This is exemplified by the gentrification of the Central District, where the percentage of Black working-class and low-income residents has plunged from 70 percent in the 1970s to less than 20 percent today; and

WHEREAS, the people who gain from the suffering of tens of thousands of Seattle's renters and tens of millions of renters nationwide are corporate landlords who have raked in astronomical profits from these rent increases. A [report by Accountable.US](#) found that the six largest property management companies in the U.S. made \$4.3 billion in profits in 2022, which is over \$1.3 billion more than in 2021; and

WHEREAS, Washington State has banned any form of residential rent control since 1981 when, under real estate lobby influence, a law was passed in Olympia stating "No city or town of any class may enact, maintain, or enforce ordinances or other provisions which regulate the amount of rent to be charged"; and

WHEREAS, Democrats and Republicans in Olympia have made clear that they have no intention of taking action on lifting the ban on rent control without mass pressure from a grassroots movement of socialists, renters, union members, and other working people;

WHEREAS, More than 35,000 working people have signed [petitions](#), and thousands have marched and rallied to demand the Seattle City Council take action on rent control since 2014; and

WHEREAS, Councilmember Kshama Sawant is introducing legislation in the Seattle City Council to cap residential rent increases at the rate of inflation, with no corporate loopholes, to go into effect as soon as the state ban on rent control is lifted. Winning this legislation would generate huge momentum to build the grassroots movement needed to force the State Legislature to lift the ban; and

WHEREAS, We have proven that when union members and working-class renters get organized and fight, we can win. Since 2014, working people and renters have won [ten significant renters' rights victories](#), which were only possible with active support from labor unions. Most recently, renters won a [\\$10 per month limit on late rent fees](#), despite the opposition of corporate landlords and attempts by even self-described "labor Democrats" to serve corporate greed;

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that **PCC Workers United** supports the legislation introduced by Councilmember Sawant to cap rent increases at the rate of inflation, to go into effect as soon as the state ban on rent control is lifted; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that **PCC Workers United** demands that City Council Democrats vote YES on Councilmember Sawant's bill, with no delays or attempts to water it down, to provide urgent protection to all renters against exorbitant rent increases; and

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED, that **PCC Workers United** will mobilize our members to City Council public comment periods to demand that Councilmembers vote YES on Councilmember Sawant's legislation, and take other actions to build the strongest possible movement for rent control, including sending an email and text message to union members urging them to sign Councilmember Sawant's [rent control petition](#), and forwarding a copy of this resolution to all Seattle City Councilmembers at council@seattle.gov; and

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED, that **PCC Workers United** urges the leadership of our union, UFCW Local 3000, and the broader leadership of the labor movement, including the MLK County Labor Council, to pass similar resolutions and support the fight for rent control in Seattle.